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ASTRONOMICAL LORE IN CHAUCER, by Florence M. Grim, A.M., Assistant in the University of Nebraska Library. University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature and Criticism. Lincoln, 1919. 96 pp.

Universities which require a thesis for the A.M. degree have a chance to produce really useful contributions to scholarship. It may be the solution of a small concrete problem—the source of allusions or ideas, the formation of a background for some trait or conviction of an author, or the like. It may be collecting occurrences of a certain idea or usage, significant for the understanding of an author, period or type; at times a careful bibliography might fit in here and be of good service. Many subjects of both kinds can be handled without the independent initiative which a candidate for the doctorate is supposed to have; provided, that is, the professor is willing to take an interest and make the problem or task in some degree his own. Such work can be made to grow out of and contribute to the research of the professor's more advanced students or his own. I would by no means obliterate the distinction between work for the A.M. and that for the Ph.D. degree, nor, most certainly, rule out the purely critical thesis, if its theme is well chosen and suited to the worker. But most students of ability take with eagerness to the idea of finding something new and valuable. The most minute problem may broaden them by opening a vista into a region of stimulating novely, and strengthen by requiring intelligent selection and decision; even intelligent collecting requires discrimination which removes it far from the mechanical. But my main point here is that such work, stimulating to the student, may also serve scholarship. More or less of it should be publishable, at any rate in a university series. Ways can be contrived of letting two students check each other, and perhaps of letting a third combine results. A volume of notes or short papers can be got together now and then which will be a credit to the university and a great stimulus to later students. But before publication someone should take the editorial trouble to see that the writer removes scaffolding, rash guesses, trite explanations, and digressions not viable enough to extract for footnotes or appendixes, and that he reduces his results to their essentials. A reader cannot be expected to supply his own flail and fan.

Miss Grim's thesis is of the second type mentioned at first. After a chapter on astronomy in the middle ages, she appraises Chaucer's knowledge of the subject and names some of its sources, and then sets forth the passages which illustrate his cosmology and his conception and poetic use of astronomy and

astrology. She shows literary feeling, has formed her background, has read and understands Chaucer well, is usually careful in her statements, and has made some good observations, as when she remarks (p. 28) that Chaucer's astronomical references are almost always either figurative or for definition of times and seasons. Miss Grim's paper, in spite of its needless length, is distinctly creditable to her and to all concerned in it. Professor Pound's students have produced a number of such contributions.

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GEORG RUDOLF WECKHERLIN: The Embodiment of a Transitional Stage in German Metrics. By Aaron Schaffer, Ph.D. [*Hesperia*, No. 10.] Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1918. Pp. vi, 116.

Whatever may and will be said in the following about the monograph before us, it should be understood from the outset that, in the reviewer's humble opinion, we are here dealing with an earnest attempt to solve one of the most baffling problems in the history of German versification. Whether we agree with him or not, the author compels us to think over again, with utmost care, practically every point on which he touches, not only for its own sake but also on account of the far-reaching conclusions which our decision involves. A brief summary of the study will at once reveal to what this is due. We find it in the author's "Conclusion" (p. 112 f.) which we quote in full, inserting a few details and the page numbers in brackets;

"The study proper falls into two main parts. The first of these parts [pp. 1-57] concerns itself with an attempt to trace the development in German metrics from the purely accentuating technique of early Germanic poetry, through the transitional stage seen in the irregularly alternating technique of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, to the accentuating-alternating technique laid down by Opitz. The phases in the development of these successive metrical principles are taken up in greater or less detail [Early Germanic Metrics, pp. 3-8; The Metrics of Otfried, pp. 8-9; Middle High German Metrics, pp. 10-14; The Romance Metrical Technique, pp. 15-17; Metrics in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, pp. 18-38; Hans Sachs to Opitz, pp. 38-51; Martin Opitz, pp. 52-57]; considerable emphasis is laid upon the application of the theories of *schwebende Betonung* and 'secondary accent' to the much debated technique of the *kurze Reimpaare* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

"The second part of the study [pp. 58-111] takes up specifically, in the poetry of Weckherlin, the problems referred to in